

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 (cancelled)

11. (new) Rescue vessel for vessels, of the type that delimits an elongated basin (12, 26) by at least 150 m in length and 30 m in width, and that comprises a ballast device that makes it possible to alter the vessel's draft by at least 15 m, characterized in that it comprises a hull that comprises two lateral hulls that surround basin (12, 26) and that delimits at least one upper edge of basin (12, 26), and the ballast device operates between at least two positions in one of which basin (12, 26) is evacuated and at least the upper edge is found above sea level, and in the other of which basin (12, 26) is full because an end is found below the level of the keel of a vessel in distress.

12. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein basin (12, 26) has a length of at least 250 m and a width of at least 45 m, and the draft alteration can reach at least 20 m.

13. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein the stern comprises a virtually sealed door (18) that is intended to close the rear of basin (12) on the edge that is found below the level of the keel of a vessel in distress.

14. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein the door that can close the rear of basin (12, 26) comprises two flaps that each comprise two parts that are articulated

together around a vertical axis that is designed to work with the vertical axis of the other flap in a closed position of the door.

15. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein at least one of the ends of the two articulated parts that are distant from the vertical axis is attached to the corresponding vertical side of the rear hull by a slide that can move horizontally along the internal side of the rear part of the hull.

16. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein the door that can close the rear of basin (12) comprises a detachable panel (40) that can be ballasted to move from a position that is close to the bottom of the basin to an approximately vertical closing position of the rear of basin (12).

17. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein the two port and starboard longitudinal sides (28) of the hull both have a height that is lower by at least 20 m than that of the other two delimited sides at the front and at the rear of the vessel, and their upper edge (32) is virtually rectilinear on the largest part of its length and is provided with a reinforcement.

18. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein it comprises maneuvering means that are intended to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least the longitudinal axis of the vessel.

19. (new) Process for rescuing vessels in distress with the assistance of a rescue vessel (10, 24) that can be ballasted

and that has a basin (12, 26) according to claim 11, wherein it comprises

a first phase of movement of rescue vessel (10, 24) toward the location of the vessel in distress,

a second phase, executed close to the vessel in distress, of ballasting rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the keel of the vessel in distress, and

a third phase for introducing the vessel in distress into basin (12, 26), and

a fourth phase of putting the upper edge of basin (12, 26) above sea level.

20. (new) Application of a rescue vessel (10, 24) according to claim 11 with transport of bulky structures that are selected from among the vessels and parts of vessels, the drilling or production platforms, and the parts of such platforms, and the marine farming modules at sea.